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English as a Lingua Franca in a Translanguaging context: an analysis of a Pre-A1 communicative Italian course

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A mia mamma,
che mi ha insegnato a farcela da sola

Table of contents

Introduction

Today, our society is extremely multicultural, our communities are made up of people of different origins, mother tongues, traditions, religions. Despite all these differences, these individuals can interact, live, work, study together thanks to some tools which help them to cooperate. I believe that the most important bridge connecting people is a language, a lingua franca, which today is ELF, English as a Lingua Franca. For this reason I chose to examine this topic, focusing on its characteristics, users, and related phenomena. In addition, I decided to explore the dynamics of translanguaging, a new way of teaching and learning which I find particularly suitable to our multicultural society. In fact, it gives the appropriate value to all different cultures and languages inside the classroom and leads the students to cooperate and help each other. This type of learning process raises future generations who will be aware of differences, but positively open to diversity. To directly observe these phenomena described above, I chose a class of a Pre-A1 Communicative Italian course as a case study. This intensive course held at the University of Padua Language Centre (CLA) enabled me to explore both the use of English as a Lingua Franca, and a translanguaging context.

This dissertation is made up of three chapters, the first one presents English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), the second discusses Translanguaging and the third chapter is dedicated to a case study, which is the observation of a Pre-A1 Communicative Italian course held at the University of Padua. The research questions that I want to focus on are: "Which communicative strategies do ELF users employ in a Pre-A1 Communicative Italian course?" and "How can a translanguaging context facilitate the language learning process in a multicultural class?". The first question seeks to analyse the common recurrent strategies which occur in ELF interactions, in particular in a foreign language class. The second question is relevant because it aims to understand how the language learning process works when the class includes students with different language and cultural backgrounds.

In the first chapter some background information regarding the classification of languages (L1, L2, FL) is given, followed by a clear definition of English as a Lingua Franca. Then, the recurrent ELF lexicogrammar is explained through the description of VOICE (Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English), the online corpus containing

data from spoken ELF. The first chapter continues with the explanation of the English use within education; in fact EMI (English Medium Instruction) programmes are presented with their structure. This chapter concludes with the discussion of language learning strategies used by students learning a second language.

The second chapter illustrates what translanguaging is, its advantages and challenges. The chapter continues with the explanation of the role of teachers and the ecology of learning. Following that, translanguaging practices are presented along with a relevant project implemented in the USA, the CUNY-NYSIEB (City University of New York's State Initiative for Emergent Bilinguals).

The third chapter is dedicated to the analysis of a case study, a Pre-A1 Communicative Italian course held at the University of Padua Language Centre. Firstly, the research method is presented, illustrating the structure and the use of participant observation and the written questionnaire. The chapter continues with the presentation of the context, giving information regarding lessons' plan and describing the participants, both the teacher and the students, who are the object of the research. Then the data collected are reported and finally analysed with reference to the theories extensively presented in the previous chapters.

1. ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA

This dissertation seeks to analyze the interaction occurring within a Pre-A1 Communicative Italian class at the University of Padua. For this reason, it is important to define what is the language medium the teacher and students use, which is English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). ELF is different from EFL, English as a Foreign Language, so it is fundamental to give clear definitions of them. Moreover, it will be reported what the ELF corpus (VOICE) is and how it is structured. Then explaining the spread of the English language in the academic environment is relevant in understanding in which educational environment the students and the teacher are located. In addition, to answer one of the two research questions (Which communicative strategies do ELF users employ in a Pre-A1 Communicative Italian course?) an illustration of the main strategies is given. Finally, an overview of appropriate methods and activities to adopt in class is presented to introduce the multicultural learning environment.

1.1 English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) vs. English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Each person living in a community knows at least their first language, called L1, which is their mother tongue. This individual can learn a second language (L2), for instance, if it is spoken in the place they live, that is their family, school, or workplace. Then there is the foreign language (FL), which is learned in a subsequent moment, usually at school, like English taught at primary school in Italy. These definitions attempt to draw a line between the native speaker (NS) and the non-native speaker (NNS). An example of the "relationship" between NSs and NNSs is that of English, which shows how the spread of a language all around the world leads to a constant increase of speakers until "'native speakers' of English are clearly outnumbered by 'non-native speakers'" (Seidlhofer, 2013: 2).

A well-known categorization of English speakers from all over the world was devised in the 1990s by Kachru (1992: 356), who created the Concentric Circles: the "Inner Circle" is made up of countries in which English is the first language (for example the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia); then there is the "Outer Circle", whose countries use English as their second official language (such as Nigeria or India). The third category is the "Expanding Circle", in which English is the foreign language

(EFL) (for example China or Russia). However, as discussed below, what is missing from Kachru's description is the wide use of English amongst non-native speakers, indeed nowadays 320-380 million speakers belong to the Inner Circle, while the Expanding Circle constitutes 500-1000 million speakers, as Crystal's (2012: 61) survey showed. Observing this data, it is evident that, thus far, conversations entailing the use of English take place mostly among non-native speakers, as reported in Ethnologue (21st edition 2018) "only 4% of English conversations do not include a non-native speaker".

When a language is used as a medium, meaning that it is the only instrument two or more people from different cultures and language backgrounds have to communicate, it is called 'Lingua Franca'. Over the centuries there have been several lingua franca, depending on the continent: for instance, Italian was widely employed in Europe during the 16th century. It can be said that the current lingua franca is English, indeed, it is used in different contexts, business, education, technology, and for this reason it is called ELF, English as a Lingua Franca. Many scholars have studied ELF and given different definitions:

"[...] in using this term I am referring to a specific communication context: English being used as a lingua franca, the common language of choice, among speakers who come from different linguacultural backgrounds." (Jenkins, 2009: 200)

"[...] I take English as a lingua franca to mean a contact language between speakers or speaker groups when at least one of them uses it as a second language." (Jenkins et al., 2017)

"[...] a 'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication" (Firth, 1996: 240).

"[...] English as a language of communication between speakers for whom it is an additional language is assuming an increasingly vital role outside countries where English has an official status" (Mauranen et al., 2009: 1)

Today, due to the spread of English, the areas of language proficiency described by Kachru may no longer be appropriate. A change is visible in the research conducted by EF Education First, which created the EF English Proficiency Index, a ranking of 112 countries by English skills. The results for the year 2021 show that the thirteen countries with a very high proficiency are mostly located in the European continent (for example

Netherlands, Austria, Denmark) except for Singapore and South Africa. Italy is in 35th place with a moderate proficiency, while most of the southern countries (Brazil, Mexico, Egypt, Thailand) have a low or very low level of proficiency.

Comparing these data with Kachru's circles a discrepancy is quite evident. European countries, which, according to Kachru, do not use English on a daily basis, have a high proficiency index. On the contrary, many of the countries of the Outer Circle, which should have English as a second language, have a lower level of proficiency. This comparison shows that categorizing countries following their official or unofficial languages is no longer relevant. Moreover, Kachru's definition of the Expanding Circle assumes that these people follow the language rules imposed by the Inner Circle, but the reality is that today English is used for various reasons in different contexts with the aim of communication. This means for example that respecting the rules of pronunciation, such as words stress or accent, may not be a priority for the speakers. They may have learned English as a foreign language at school, but then use English as a lingua franca in their everyday life. EFL is the medium for every international context, be it education, business, technology, or daily conversation. A clear example of that is the Netherlands, which has the highest score in EF EPI ranking, in fact, Amsterdam is among the tenth most multicultural cities in the world, with 180 different nationalities. An attempt at giving a new up-to-date image of Kachru's Circles is that of Prodromou (2008: xiv), who explains that "[...] ELF is not a separate entity but the outcome of all circles interacting. It is neither one L2-user talking to another L2-user nor L1-users imposing their norms on everybody else." After defining ELF and its users, it is now relevant to describe its main features. The following section will present ELF lexicogrammar and some examples of its practical use.
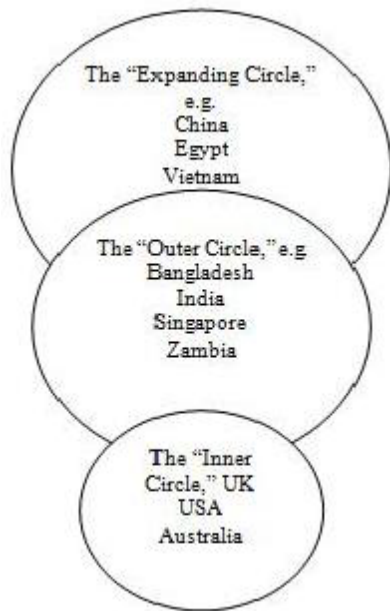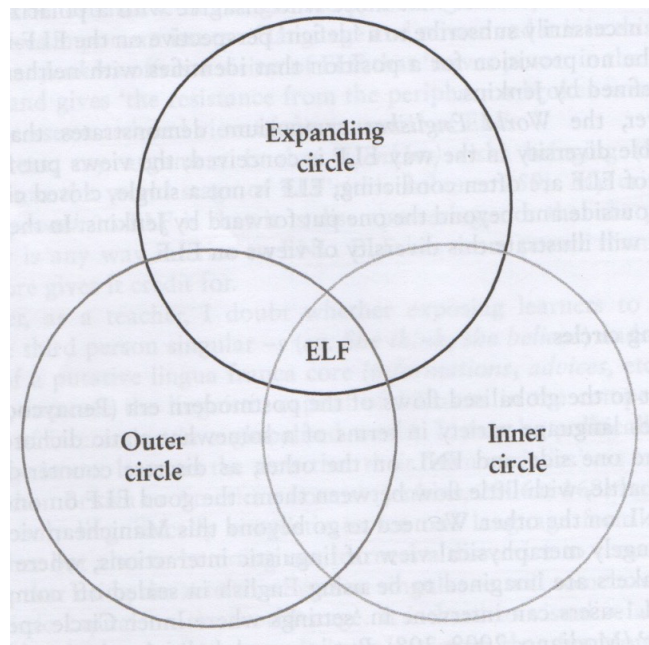
Figure 1. Kachru's Circles of English[1]   Figure 2. The circles of World Englishes
(Prodromou, 2008)

1.2 Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE)

"ELF is thus defined functionally by its use in intercultural communication rather than formally by its reference to native-speaker norms." (Hülmbauer et al., 2008: 26). ELF is not an incorrect or basic version of English, nor an attempt to achieve Standard British or American English. It has its aim in communication, and as the name says, it is a lingua franca that connects people who would not have the possibility to interact without its existence. This bridge created by ELF allows people all around the world to work, study, learn other languages, use technology (Jenkins, 2012).

ELF speakers use an existing linguistic code, and for this reason, the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE) was created to analyze and report on the use of ELF among its users worldwide. VOICE is an online corpus that contains data regarding spoken ELF; it was created by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) at the department of English of Vienna University. The data reported on this website corresponds to 120 hours of discourse transcripts, which means 1 million words of spoken ELF. The project began in 2001 and the corpus was finally released in 2009.

VOICE has three transcription conventions: transcriptions have to be as realistic as possible, the scheme has to be clear and replicable, and the results must be computer-

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[1] Source of Figure 1: World Englishes, https://doanbangoc.wordpress.com/2011/07/26/world-englishes/ (accessed 30 March 2022)

readable. In addition, there are two types of conventions: the VOICE mark-up one analyzes the main features of ELF, and the VOICE spelling one standardizes the diversity of ELF. The data recorded come from several types of speech events, which means the field, the purpose and the participants' relationships are various. It can be professional, educational or leisure communication; the aim can be exchanging information, enacting social relationships, the speakers' relationships can be acquainted, unacquainted, symmetrical or asymmetrical. The utterances come from a wide range of interactions, from the most formal, such as press conferences or seminar discussions, to the most informal, for instance, everyday conversations.

The data from VOICE show some recurrent lexicogrammatical features of ELF that Seildhofer (2004 in Cogo, 2006: 73) presents as follows:

- deleting the final -s (3rd person) for the present simple
- using the relative pronouns who and which without distinguishing between them in the meaning
- avoiding articles (definite and indefinite) when they are necessary for ENL[2] and using them when they are not present in ENL
- using non-standard forms in tag questions
- adding extra prepositions
- making excessive use of some verbs with a general meaning (for example, do, have, make)
- accentuating or non-accentuating plural forms (Imperiani et al., 2019)
- adopting that clauses instead of infinitive sentence structures
- being more explicit than what is needed

The study conducted by Imperiani and Mandasari (2019) in small talk among Asian students displays the use of common features mentioned above; for example, the excessive use of prepositions accounted for 72.4% of the conversation, compared to the omission of prepositions, which resulted in 15.5%. The scholars give some examples from the transcription, such as: "We always give <fast> the presentation of about our

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[2] ENL (English Native Language): "The variety of English Language spoken by people who acquired English as their first language or mother tongue." (Nordquist, 2019)

countries". Another example provided by Imperiani and Mandasari regards the frequency of regular plural mistakes such as -consonant + y ending nouns which have -ies plural ending form. An illustration of that is the sentence pronounced by one of the Asian students: "if you have very big business <fast> in some company in some country <fast>". The findings of this study showed that ELF conversations analyzed have six recurrent characteristics mentioned by Seildhofer, but the flow of the conversation is clear and comprehensible.

Another project conducted by Mauranen at the University of Helsinki shows similar results. This is the ELFA corpus project (English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings), which was first published in 2008 and contains about 131 hours of recorded academic ELF speech, meaning one million words. The ELFA corpus analyses different academic fields, including social sciences, which account for 29% of the data, technology (19%), economics and administration (5%). The event types are both monologic and dialogic, which means they include lectures, presentations, seminars and conference discussions. The findings (Mauranen, 2010: 18) are analogous to those of VOICE; for example showing that the articles are present when the ENL has not and vice versa, the use of prepositions and plural noun endings differ from ENL speakers and the fall of final -s (3rd person) for the present simple. In addition, Mauranen notices how ELF speakers use irregular verbs following the regular paradigm, for instance, "i have just showed you" and that various uncountable nouns become countable, such as *researches*. Moreover, ELF users create new words which are not present in ENL, for example, *youngness*. According to Mauranen, this recurrent word formation activity is widespread among ELF scholars because new terms creation is frequent in academic language. Moreover, the verb usage of -ing forms, the "agreement, hypothetical *if*-clauses, and word order" are different from the ENL speech (Ranta 2006, 2009, in Mauranen, 2010).

Another study conducted by MacKenzie (2007) shows that ELF users employ both stative and dynamic verbs in the progressive form, such as *I'm understanding* and they use past time adverbials with the present perfect. Moreover, MacKenzie notes new prepositional verbs, for example, *contact with* or *phone to*, and that ELF speakers prefer the present simple instead of the present perfect to talk about the duration of an action. The data presented above are collected from several fields, which means English as a

Lingua Franca is used worldwide for different purposes. The next section will describe the educational context born as a consequence of the spread of ELF.

1.3 English Medium Instruction (EMI)

The fact that English is now used as ELF has led to other phenomena such as EMI. English Medium Instruction (EMI) has been defined as "the use of English language to teach academic subjects other than English itself in countries or jurisdictions where the first language of the majority of the population is not English" (Macaro, 2018: 19). It is important to clarify the difference between EMI and CLIL. One of the most common programmes using English in the European context is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Galloway et al., 2021), which aims to teach both academic subjects and language (Coyle et al., 2010 in Helm and Guarda, 2015:2). On the other hand, as Wilkinson (2018: 16) states "The goal of an EMI programme is the teaching and learning of disciplines through English as the language of instruction. Content is paramount, and language learning may or may not be a goal".

Today an increasing number of European and Asian institutions are introducing EMI programmes because they want to become more appealing to international students and more competitive worldwide (Wilkinson 2013 in Helm and Guarda, 2015: 3). For example, in ten years (2002-2012) the number of master's programmes taught in English increased from 560 in 19 European countries to 6779 in 11 European countries (Brenn-White & van Rest 2012 in University of Padova, 2016: 65). Universities have to offer high-quality courses to be competitive, and to gain that asset four main factors are combined: students, teachers, programme design and institutional context (Wilkinson, 2018: 18-19). The university services, history and location are as important as the methods and approaches used in the course. Students and teachers are the active protagonists of the learning process, so the competencies and expertise of both are fundamental for the learning outcome success (Wilkinson, 2018).

Focusing on the teachers, they have to know the content of the course, but they also have to manage a lesson in EMI, which does not mean switching from their mother tongue to English but also changing their approach in class from top-down to student-focused, to make learners knowledge creators (Cots 2013 in Helm and Guarda, 2015: 4). EMI programmes are quite recent, which means lecturers do not always have much

experience; as shown by a survey conducted by the British Council (Dearden, 2014: 24) reporting that 83% out of the 55 countries chosen stated that there are not enough qualified EMI teachers (Fig. 6). An example of support for lecturers' preparation given by an Italian academic institution is the University of Padua (2016) which organises a course called "Content Teaching in English" to support EMI professors from different departments. Lessons are mainly focused on spoken English, lecture organization, fluency and pronunciation improvement. After the first positive experience of this course, the University Language Centre created the LEAP (Learning English for academic purposes) Project which aimed to help and improve the EMI teaching quality of the lecturers with a previous analysis of their needs (University of Padua, 2016).

Analyzing students' difficulties Galloway and Rose (2021: 33-41) have presented four types of help concerning language support. There are two pre-sessional models denominated "Preparatory year model" and the "Selection model". The former implies a one-year course focused on professional English preceding the actual EMI course, the latter is a selection of applicants based on their proficiency in English. Then there are the in-sessional models, the "Concurrent support model" and the "Ostrich model". The former is thought to be a parallel course to the EMI one, language support classes separated from content ones. The latter simply does not imply any type of support before or during the EMI course.

Furthermore, analyzing the future of EMI, a graph reported in the British Council study shows that 67% of the respondents agreed on the increasing trend of EMI (Fig. 10). Evidently, the future of academic courses is EMI, and for this reason, adequate lecturers' preparation has to be carried out by universities to give high qualitative lessons concerning both content and language skills. In addition, students should receive concrete support while or before attending the EMI courses they are enrolled in. In the next section the language learning and communication strategies are described to understand what students actually do in class while learning a new language.

Figure 6: Percentage of the 55 countries answering Yes or No to the question 'Are there enough qualified EMI teachers?'

1.8%

14.5%

83.6%

- Yes
- No
- Not answered/not applicable
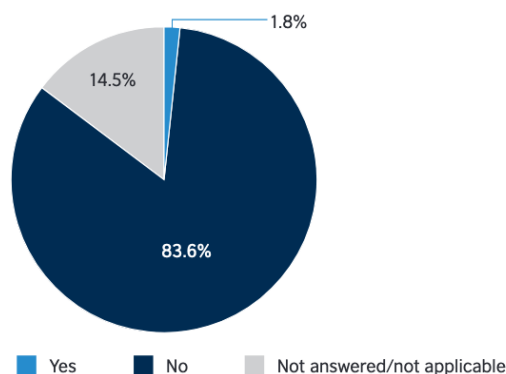
(Dearden, 2014)

Figure 10: General trend of EMI for the future – more, less, same or mixed?

4%

20%

2%

7%

67%

- More
- Less
- Same
- Mixed
- Not answered
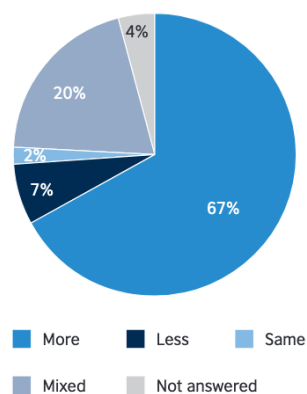
(Dearden, 2014)

1.4 Language learning strategies

Considering that the context analysed in this dissertation is a class of foreign students studying the local language, it is relevant to define the language learning strategies adopted by L2 learners. Scarcella and Oxford (1992 in Oxford, 2001) explain that language learning strategies are "specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques [...] used by students to enhance their own learning". Oxford (1990 in Oxford, 2001) divided L2 learning strategies into six categories. The first ones are cognitive strategies in which the students can work and have direct contact with the language for example by note-taking or summarizing. The second one is the metacognitive strategies consisting of "gathering and organizing materials, [...] monitoring mistakes, and evaluating task success" (Oxford, 2001). The third type of strategy is memory-related, which means learning through linking words in the foreign language for example using acronyms, rhyming or flashcards. The fourth case comprehends compensatory strategies, which are used to "make up for missing knowledge"(Oxford, 2001), for example, paraphrasing the missing word or using hand gestures referring to it. Affective strategies are the fifth group, it concerns comprehending and talking about each other's feelings, such as anxiety, and using positive self-talk. The sixth type of strategy is the social one, they enhance cooperation between students and a deeper understanding of the language and culture of study. Some examples are: "[...]asking questions to get verification, asking for clarification of a confusing point, asking for help in doing a language task [...]" (Oxford, 2001).

When it comes to speaking, as Lewandowska (2019: 27) explains, L2 learners use three strategy categories: avoidance or reduction, achievement or compensation, and stalling or time gaining tactics. The first group has two subdivisions: not

speaking/keeping silent because of lack of vocabulary and not sufficient language knowledge or leaving the sentence unfinished/incomplete. The second category includes several actions (Lewandowska, 2019):

- circumlocution: the speaker avoids the word needed and replaces it with the word's definition
- approximation: the speaker uses words that refer to items close to the chosen one
- the speaker employs the category word instead of the specific one
- the speaker invents words following some presumed rules
- non-verbal communication: the speaker uses hand gestures, micro-expressions etc.
- the speaker generates new words relying on their L1 version (calques)
- the speaker tries to use words making them appear of foreign origin
- code-switching and then asking for help to finish the sentence

The last category is made up of pauses or lexical fillers made to gain time to reflect and think about how to continue the sentence. Reflecting on these strategies it is evident that, while speaking, learners develop a strong sense of cooperation, empathy and solidarity because they are all on the same level (Pitzl 2005 in Lewandowska, 2019). After analysing what is English as a Lingua Franca, a corpus of ELF and the context which uses English as a medium of instruction, the description of language learning strategies is fundamental to understanding the next chapter, which will be dedicated to the topic of translanguaging.

2. TRANSLANGUAGING

The second part of this dissertation illustrates the topic of translanguaging, referring to its origins and development. Then the advantages of this learning process are explained to understand the importance of this pedagogical practice. On the other hand, the challenges of this approach are presented to show different perspectives on translanguaging. In addition, the ecological approach and the role of teachers are presented. Answering the second research question of this thesis: "How can a translanguaging context facilitate the language learning process in a multicultural class?" a specific pedagogical practice description is given.

2.1 What is translanguaging?

The first time a scholar used the word translanguaging was in the 1980s unintentionally, when Cen Williams coined the Welsh *trawsieithu* while was working in a school in Llandudno (North Wales) (Lewis et al., 2012). Students were part of bilingual education, but they "[...] deliberately changed the language of input and the language of output."(Garcia and Lin, 2016), in fact, they were asked to use alternately both Welsh and English in class. Up to that time being bilingual was conceived as just knowing two languages, but the study made by Williams showed bilingualism could be used in education with various learning and cognitively benefits for the students (Vogel and Garcia, 2017). The term translanguaging describes a pedagogic practice, but also an everyday language use. One of its most well-known definitions was given by Baker (2011: 288 in Lewis et al., 2012): "Translanguaging is the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages". Later, Vogel and Garcia (2017) defined translanguaging highlighting three main points:

- its users talk by employing a "unitary linguistic repertoire"
- the languages used are not only those officially recognised by the country, but the linguistic code depends on the knowledge of bilingual and multilingual people speaking

- to some extent, particularly for people speaking minority languages, "it still recognizes the material effects of socially constructed named language categories and structuralist language ideologies."

Analysing these words, it may be clear that there is no distinction between languages, there is one single system with all the linguistic features an individual knows and use in different contexts. Indeed, the process which maintain languages separate is code-switching. As Garcia and Li Wei (2014 in Paulsrud et. al., 2021: 96) explain, "Code-switching is the process of shifting between two language codes, whereas translanguaging refers to learners utilising their complete existing language repertoires". In code-switching "[...] the speaker is in one language at a time [...]" (Paulsrud et. al., 2017: 32), which means there is a change from one language to another in the person's speech.

Considering that in this paper the case study analysed is an educational context, the focus will be on translanguaging as a pedagogical practice. As Dougherty (2021: 21) says "[...] in an educational setting, translanguaging is the act of utilizing the full linguistic repertoire of all students and teachers in order to interact socially, academically, and cognitively, which can lead to identity exploration and formation.". This definition shows that translanguaging means enhancing the students' language knowledge, placing them on the same level, without creating a scale of importance between languages and cultures. There are no L1, L2, native speakers or defined languages (Vogel and Garcia, 2017), categorizations are not present, and this can lead the students to feel free to express their thoughts or knowledge in their best way. As Seals (2021) states "[...] one of the primary goals behind translanguaging is to bring more equity to the way speakers (and their linguistic repertoires) are treated in the classroom and society.". In class, racial, language and social discrimination may fade thanks to this learning method, because nobody feels judged or inferior; everyone feels comfortable within the learning context. In addition, students can be free to use a unique way of communicating, totally different from the one used outside the classroom, characterized by strict rules of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. As seen above, translanguaging gives its users an uncommon and unconstrained way of interacting with others; in the next section the advantages of this learning context are presented.

2.2 Advantages of translanguaging

Many scholars have discussed and studied the pedagogical practices of translanguaging and have discovered that there are several advantages. One of the most important experts in this field, Colin Baker (2001 in Garcia and Lin, 2016), describes four main benefits of translanguaging. The first is the fact that it allows the students to comprehend and absorb the knowledge more completely because the concepts are not delivered and explained in one single main language, but as Baker (2011: 289 in Garcia and Lin, 2016) explains, "To read and discuss a topic in one language, and then to write about it in another language, means that the subject matter has to be processed and "digested". The second advantage is that students can make progress in the language they know the least while learning another subject. The third benefit is simplifying the relations between the educational institution, the school, and the private institution, the students' families. Employing mixed speech avoids misunderstanding in some cases such as when the family do not know one of the languages used by the teachers. In this way, they can participate and help their children to study and do their homework, for example. The fourth advantage is the fact that students help each other by learning and using different languages. Someone who is more fluent in one language can give support to others who are maybe good speakers of another one.

Another important researcher in the field is Jim Cummins (2017), who explains that several studies conducted on primary school students in the last 50 years show how using more than one language increased the children's knowledge of the language and its use. Moreover, Barac and Bialystok (2011 in Cummins, 2017) report that, thanks to a translanguaging approach in class, students experience "[...] cognitive benefits in the areas of attentional control, working memory, abstract and symbolic representation skills, and metalinguistic awareness." Consequently, the frequent use of different languages at the same time and the deep understanding of their structures creates an easier approach towards learning new languages (Adesop et al., 2010 in Cummins, 2017). Analysing some findings by Thompson (2015), Cummins (2017) points out that educators encourage students' families to practice both the home and L2 academic language. This suggestion may be introduced in Italian schools because in some cases foreign families tend to speak only their L1 because they want to preserve their culture and language background, or, on the contrary, they force their children to speak the language used at school, because

they want them to integrate quickly in the society. An open dialogue between educators and families would be relevant to spread and develop awareness regarding the importance of practicing more than one language at the same time.

Anwaruddin (2018) points to an advantage of translanguaging discussed by Canagarajah (2013) which is learning and practicing how to negotiate in multilingual contexts. Reflecting on this observation, it may be clear that attending a multicultural and multilanguage class means interacting with different people and their own background every day, this exercise may be certainly useful for their future, but also for everyday life when a translanguaging situation or conversation occurs. Although translanguaging has many advantages, there are also some challenging features which have to be taken into account for this reason they will be presented in the next section.

2.3 Challenges of translanguaging

Each teaching approach has its own benefits, and at the same time it has some complex aspects. The case of translanguaging is particularly challenging because the code used to communicate is not monolingual, but rich, various and demands much effort on the part of both students and teachers. Ticheloven et al. (2019) present seven challenges which can be generated in a translanguaging contexts:

- Side effects: isolating students, for example a student is excluded from a group because the language used there is unknown for him/her.
- Goal formulation: having general learning goals decided collectively is complicated, because teachers do not always agree among themselves.
- Learning the language of schooling: practicing the language of schooling if students are not proficient in it.
- English and other semiotic resources: using English as a global lingua franca may be an issue because not all the students know it. Concerning the use of picture dictionaries or smart boards with pictures, they can represent a problem because languages got divided and isolated.
- Affective functions: using other languages to express affective functions can be an issue for students, in fact,for instance, they feel more comfortable expressing their negative emotions or jokes in their own language.

- Effort: demanding effort for both teachers and students depending on the fluency of each language, for instance a teacher who has to use more languages in the class even the students already know the language of schooling.
- Confusion: using more than one language at the same time creates confusion for some students, for example, if they are introduced to translanguaging practice in adolescence when they are already used to maintaining languages separate.

Another problem related to translanguaging pedagogical practices is the one pointed out by Garcia and Lin (2016), who explain the contrast between the use of strong and weak versions of translanguaging. The first one consists in letting students use their personal linguistic repertoire without restrictions, while the second one involves the use of clearly distinguished national official languages. The issue concerns both approaches, because the former lets the students choose how to express themselves fully, but it does not take into account the fact that official languages exist and are actually used separately outside the learning context. The weak translanguaging approach does not treat minority and official languages equally, which means students are deprived of a part of their identity. The solution proposed by Garcia and Lin (2016) is to adopt some aspects of the two versions of translanguaging, which means creating spaces in which students have to use the languages separately and others in which learners are free to use their personal repertoire without rules and impositions. After examining both the advantages and challenges of translanguaging, the next section will deal with the ecological approach of learning and the roles of teachers in a translanguaging class.

2.4 Ecology of learning and the role of teachers

The translanguaging educational context is particularly complex; it is characterised by several benefits, but it is also very challenging. This particular setting needs to have some specific features which make up the ecological approach. Van Lier (2010) states that:

> An ecological approach aims to look at the learning process, the actions and activities of teachers and learners, the multilayered nature of interaction and language use, in all their complexity and as a network of interdependencies among all the elements in the setting, not only at the social level, but also at the physical and symbolic level.

Van Lier (2010) explains the main characteristics of this ecology, which are relationships, context, emergent patterns, quality, value, critical perspective, variability, diversity and agency. Three of them hold the others and need a further explanation.

The first feature are relationships of different kinds, social, physical and symbolic, not only between people, but also between an individual and an object, for example as pointing to something and saying, "look at that!" or using interjections such as "Wow!" to express a thought or emotion. The second aspect of the ecology examined by Van Lier is quality, which does not mean evaluating teaching methods and outcomes following standard test or tables. What really matters is the experience lived by the learners, how they felt during the learning process and how they managed with the teaching approach, for example. The third characteristic analysed is agency, which refers to the active role of learners, who are free to take actions and make decisions independently. In this way the learning context will be various thanks to students' different attitudes.

Adopting an ecological approach means creating and enhancing diversity within the multicultural and multilanguage class. This approach aims to create an equal learning context in which the students can enrich their identities and disrupt social constructs regarding languages and cultures. Translanguaging itself is naturally used within certain situations, such as in international work situation, but when it is implemented in class the educational setting has to be prepared. In order to organize lessons and create proper activities it can be interesting introducing a collaboration between teachers and researchers inside the class because

> Collaborative research approaches center teacher's experience and knowledge of their context and highlight new possibilities when researchers (carefully and thoughtfully) bring new ideas, strategies, and often institutional resources to these collaborative endeavors (Gutiérrez and Vossoughi, 2010 in Tian and Shepard-Carey, 2020).

Before this idea of collaboration, there were other studies on teacher's must-have (García et al., 2017 in Tian and Shepard-Carey, 2020), which concerned stance, which means that the teacher has to consider the learner's linguistic repertoire as relevant knowledge and a positive, unique linguistic resource.

Secondly, we need to consider the design, which concerns the previous preparation of activities used by the teachers: these exercises have to give equal space to both the home and school languages of the students. The third one is the shifts, an actual change of activities prepared in advance, because they have to fit and adapt to the group

of students present. For the new context of collaboration between teachers and researchers, Tian and Shepard-Carey (2020) propose three main points which have to be respected: co-stance, co-design and co-shifts. The first one concerns the collaboration between teachers and researchers, who have to listen, discuss and negotiate the translanguaging pedagogies to use in each class. Teachers and educators have to be flexible and open to new ideas from the colleagues because each group of students is different, and they have to find the strategy which better fits the learners. The second point is co-design, which means creating the actual activities to do in class, from structuring the whole programme, to organizing single lessons and homework. In this case, teachers and researchers have to show both their expertise in the educational context, but also creativity to adapt activities in a translanguaging class. Finally, there are co-shifts, which regards reflecting and critiquing the activities implemented in class; in this case it is important to understand what worked and what has to be modified. After analysing the characteristics of an ecological approach in class and what is the role of teachers in this educational context, it may be relevant to present the actual practices employed in class. The next section will deal with the practical use of translanguaging method used by teachers and students.

2.5 Translanguaging practices

"Translanguaging is a ground-up approach to teaching where learners become co-creators of knowledge" (Ticheloven et al., 2019). Analysing these words, it may be clear that there is no hierarchy between teachers and students, moreover the former is not giving lecturers or theoretical lessons to the latter. Learners are free to learn to use their language knowledge, whether they are official or minority languages. The teachers have to encourage students to be independent users of their multilingual knowledge and they suggest activities such as group work not imposing a monolingual approach as in most the educational context. Moreover, teachers help learners with the cross-linguistic transfer, which "[...] embodies language learners' use of linguistic knowledge of their first language to leverage the learning of a second language" (Yang et al., 2017). This pedagogy in which the content of the lesson is not imposed from the authority of a teacher but comes from the students' construction of knowledge is clearly explained in the figure 1.
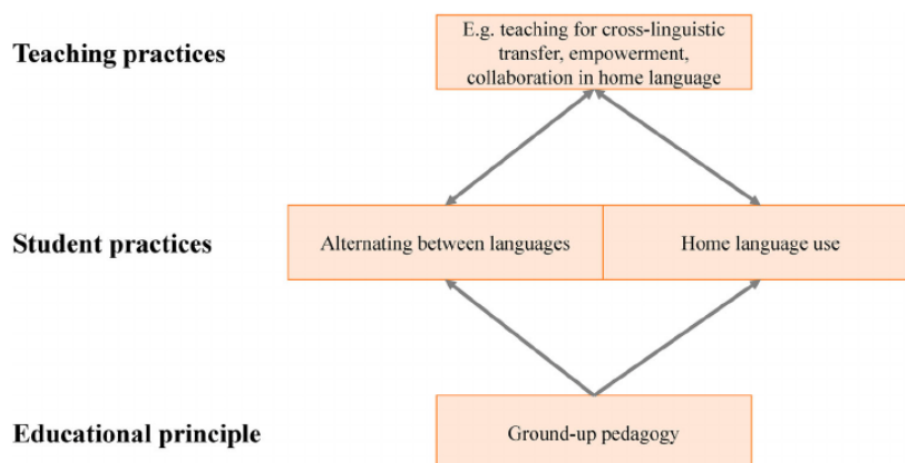
Figure 1 Translanguaging as pedagogy (Ticheloven et. al., 2019)

Moving to some examples of the actual use of translanguaging, Ticheloven et al. (2019) present some of its practices. The first one is encouraging students to use their languages in class with simple activities, for example greeting each other. Another activity proposed is preparing assignments in which students have to write using all the different linguistic knowledge they have. Regarding group work, pairing students to work together and letting them choose freely the language of communication. This exercise should be done with students "having different levels of the language of schooling."(Ticheloven et al., 2019). One more practice can be suggesting the students compare their languages, for example looking for similar words to expand their vocabulary. Also, paraphrasing discourses in different languages after translating them is a translanguaging activity. To develop the vocabulary and the metalinguistic awareness Ticheloven et al. (2019) suggest contrasting languages through reading comprehension.

Cummins (2017) identifies four main translanguaging teaching activities. The first one concerns learning a few words every day from different students to give value to each language, culture and individual present. An example given by Cummins (2017) is creating a 'multilingual corner' in the class where all the new words taught by students every day are placed. Another idea presented is creating school signs, indicating a specific place using more than one language (Figure 1). The second teaching activity is inviting new students to use their L1, for instance during project work, research or reading. The third practice presented by Cummins (2017) concerns the use of the Internet to communicate, for instance, Google Translate, and teaching each other about places of

origin, for example showing on Google Earth the home country. The fourth activity proposed is creating dual-language projects, for example working on writing dual language books or poetries.

Figure 1 Multilingual sign for the school office in Crescent Town Public School, Toronto District School Board (Cummins, 2017)

An example of a translanguaging project is the CUNY-NYSIEB (City University of New York's State Initiative for Emergent Bilinguals) founded in 2011 by researchers in the field of translanguaging such as Ofelia García. Within the project the protagonists are emergent bilingual students in New York State because they are learning English but already know other languages. The project aims to "[...] consider bilingualism as the desired norm for all American students and not as the exceptional quality of a few". Moreover, the CUNY-NYSIEB states that "The dynamism of the fluid language practices[...]" eliminates the barriers between the definitions of native speakers, L1 or L2; the researchers support the idea that the knowledge and skills of bilingual students are extremely relevant for the linguistic and cultural learning of the school's community. All the schools taking part in the CUNY-NYSIEB project have to respect two main rules: the first one is implementing an ecological approach, making visible all the different multilanguage and multicultural backgrounds of students and families. The second one is a positive attitude toward bilingualism, which is considered a resource for the learning process. The CUNY-NYSIEB project considers the monolingual approach as old and

constraining, instead, it supports an education which aims to all the learners' different needs, from academic to social ones.

The researchers taking part in the CUNY-NYSIEB project created materials and studied strategies for educators which have been used all around the world. On the website of the project, a section is dedicated to newcomer emergent bilinguals, new young students who moved to the U.S. from other countries. It is important to remember how these learners are different, they do not only differ in nationality, religion, and language, but also in the type of schooling they had before, their socio-economic situation, and their experience with academic environments. They could also be refugees leaving their country because of a war, or unaccompanied minors, who arrived in the country without their parents. The first thing to do is an interview with the newcomers to understand and learn more about them, in this phase it is important to be open and if it is possible use the home language of the students. The next step is giving the newcomers some materials regarding the school policies and general information, it can also be useful to prepare a basic vocabulary on the school topic and some entry activities to do. Then creating a video welcoming newcomers is important both for students and their families to feel accepted by the community.

In addition, one of the most important practices to introduce newcomers is making their languages visible inside the school, for example, by creating children's posters with images of fruits and the linked words next to them in more than one language (Figure 1). This exercise makes the newcomers "[...] feel like experts with valuable knowledge to share with others, whose language was valuable within the community." It is also suggested that in the first period spent at school the newcomer has a "buddy", someone translating or giving help and information regarding the school context and activities. When organizing class activities, teachers have to use multilingual and multicultural texts (Celic and Seltzer, 2012) and "[...] encourage Newcomer Emergent Bilinguals to use their home languages to think, read, and write [...]"(Fu, 2009). Moreover, according to CUNY-NYSIEB researchers using technological devices should be allowed, not only to translate but also to create texts with images, and recordings.

After discussing some translanguaging practices and giving a relevant example of a school project, the next chapter will be devoted to the analysis of a Pre-A1 communicative Italian course at the University of Padua.

Figure 1 A bulletin board[3]

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[3] Source of Figure 1: CUNY-NYSIEB, https://www.cuny-nysieb.org (accessed 2 May 2022)

3. CASE STUDY: A PRE-A1 COMMUNICATIVE ITALIAN COURSE

This third chapter is dedicated to the analysis of a case study. The research is focused on a multicultural class of students learning Italian through English as a Lingua Franca. Firstly, the method of observation is explained to understand the resulting data. Then, the context and the participants are presented to explain the composition of the class and the interactions. Next, the data collected are provided and analysed concerning the theories presented in the first and second chapters. This case study gives a practical answer to the two research questions of this dissertation: "Which communicative strategies do ELF users adopt in a Pre-A1 Communicative Italian course?" and "How can a translanguaging context facilitate the language learning process in a multicultural class?".

3.1 Method

In this research, two main methods are used: participant observation and a written questionnaire. The first method used is participant observation, which is generally, as reported in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "a research technique in anthropology and sociology characterized by the effort of an investigator to gain entrance into and social acceptance by a foreign culture or alien group so as better to attain a comprehensive understanding of the internal structure of the society". This method was created by Bronislaw Malinowski and Franz Boas (Crossman, 2019) and then used for the first time at the Chicago School of Sociology in the 20th century. Crossman (2019) explains that, when conducting a participant observation, the researcher has to be both a subjective and objective participant, which means using "[...] knowledge gained through personal involvement with the research subjects to interact with and gain further access to the group." At the same time, it means noticing, recording, and collecting data without influencing them by personal opinions, but Crossman claims that this type of observation is inevitably influenced by the researcher's experience. Yet, Crossman (2019) states that the observer's immersion inside a group of people results in a deep knowledge of the context and participants, objects of the study.

The second research method adopted in this case study is a written questionnaire. Sir Francis Galton first created one in late 1800: "A questionnaire enables quantitative data to be collected in a standardized way so that the data are internally consistent and

coherent for analysis" (Roopa and Rani, 2017). As Roopa and Rani (2017) explain, there are various types of survey questions: contingency questions/Cascade format, matrix questions, closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. Those used in the questionnaire for this specific case study are a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions, which include yes/no questions, multiple-choice and completely unstructured questions. After explaining the method used for the research, the next section presents the context of the case study in detail.

3.2 Context

The subject chosen in this research is a class of students attending a Pre-A1 Communicative Italian course at the University of Padua. The following data were taken in notes during lessons through the participant observation. The course was held in presence; due to the pandemic restrictions everyone was obliged to wear a face mask and the students had to keep a social distance. The course plan was organized for two weeks, Monday to Friday, from February 7th to February 18th, 2022. Each lesson lasted one hour and a half from 2.30 p.m. to 4.00 p.m., for a total of eight lessons and then a final exam. It was an intensive course focusing on oral skills, which means the lessons were organized to create several activities involving interaction between the participants. The topics of lessons were organized as in the following table (Table 1).

Lesson 1	Greetings, self-presentation (name, nationality, address, age, studies)
Lesson 2	Hobbies, food
Lesson 3	Possessives, family, needs and emotions
Lesson 4	Present tense in the three conjugations, like and dislike, typical expressions (birthday, marriage etc.)
Lesson 5	Physical appearance and personality
Lesson 6	How to book a hotel room, how to order something (at the bar/restaurant)
Lesson 7	Daily routine, reflexive verbs
Lesson 8	Modal verbs, how to give information on the street

Table 1: Organization and topics of the lesson

The format of the exam was an informal conversation between a student and the teacher. The questions and expressions used were those studied during the lessons. The course started from a Pre-A1 level which means that the students had to acquire an A1 level at the end of it. According to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), a basic user at the A1 level:

> Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

The data presented above refer only to the context of the research, the next section will provide information regarding the participants, who were both the teacher and the students.

3.3 Participants

The following data concern the participants of the Pre-A1 Communicative Italian course chosen for this research and were taken in notes during lessons while conducting the participant observation or asking direct questions if I needed specific information. The data concern the number of students, their studies, age, nationality, knowledge of languages and in particular English. In addition to students, one male teacher was in charge; he was an Italian native speaker, with a four-year degree in Foreign Languages and a Master's in teaching Italian to foreigners. He had wide experience in teaching English to Italian students and Italian to immigrants and foreigners abroad. The course was attended by a total of 25 students, but only 13 took the final exam. The students were attending the University of Padua thanks to the Erasmus project or other exchange programmes. The data presented below come from the online written questionnaire I created with Google Forms, which received a total of 13 answers. The students were studying different subjects (for example Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Local Development, Physics) at various levels (from Bachelor to PhD). Consequently, their age varied, as shown in the diagram (Diagram 2).
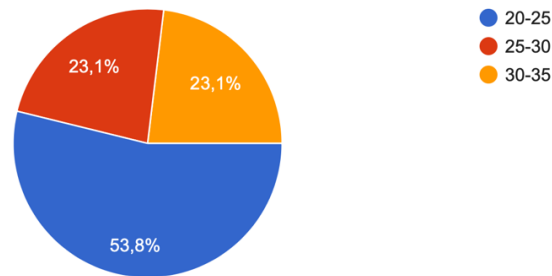
How old are you?

Diagram 2: Age of the students

As concerns the nationality of the students the following diagram shows that most of them came from the Middle East (Diagram 3).
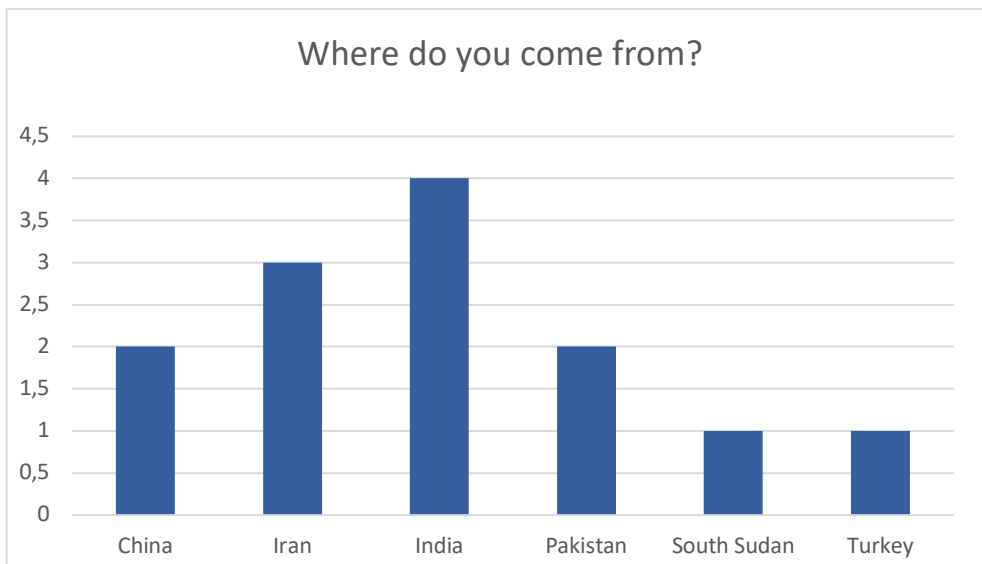

Diagram 3: Students' nationality

Depending on their nationality, they have different mother tongues, Chinese, Arabic, Hindi, Persian, Urdu, and Turkish. However, when the students answered the question "Which languages do you speak?", the respondents repeated their mother tongue and then wrote English. Two of them also added French.

Regarding their level of English, it varies, as shown in the diagram below (Diagram 4).
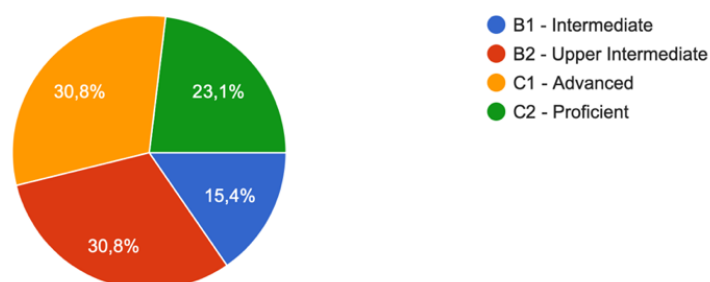
What is your English level?

Diagram 4: Students' English level

After presenting relevant information regarding the teacher and the students of the course, the next section is dedicated to my observations during lessons regarding the teacher's and students' use of different languages.

3.4 Data collection

When in class, I observed the interactions between students and the teacher, and I helped the students while they were speaking in pairs and needed some assistance. The following data come from the participant observation conducted and concern the use of different languages in class, both by the teacher and students. The data collected are mainly focused on English and Italian because the course aimed to teach students Italian through English. Regarding the English language use, I noticed that the teacher used it in the following situations:

- giving instructions for exercises, such as homework or group conversations in class;
- explaining grammar rules, for example, "Mi lavo. I am washing myself, who am I washing? Myself";
- clarifying something already explained in Italian;
- making comparisons between English and Italian;
- checking if the class already knew a word, for example, the professor says "Amare...?" and the students collectively respond "To love";
- making jokes;

- translating verbs or expressions, for instance, "Vorrei - I would like".

As concerns the students' use of English, I noticed they used it as follows:

- asking the teacher for clarifications;

- asking for a translation, for example, "I want to say 'both'";

- repeating in English what they said in Italian to be sure to be understood;

- substituting a word they didn't know in a sentence, for instance, "Io ho twenty-three anni";

- asking classmates to help or to explain better, for example, "Do you mean...?";

- gaining attention while speaking in a group in Italian, for instance, "Now I will ask you a question".

Concerning the use of Italian, the teacher used it when:

- correcting students' mistakes, for example repeating the word using its correct form;

- unintentional exclamation, such as "Mamma mia!";

- greeting students, for example, "Ciao! Buongiorno!";

- giving simple instructions, for instance "Dividiamoci in gruppi, parliamo!";

- congratulating the students when they do not make mistakes, for example, "Bene! / Bravo/a!".

The students used Italian in the following situations:

- greeting the teacher and the other students;

- saying "Sì /No /Grazie";

- working in pairs or groups;

- doing their homework;

- writing parts of their notes.

The students used their mother tongues (Arabic, Chinese, Hindi etc.) and dialects when:

- helping each other when Italian and English were not enough to understand a concept;

- correcting each other if one understood the grammar rule and the other did not;

- commenting on an idiom, a gesture or an Italian cultural practice mentioned or performed by the teacher;

- writing a part of their notes;

- making jokes.

Regarding the use of languages in class, apart from Italian (the language they were learning) on the questionnaire I asked what other language they used when working in pairs. The results are shown in the following diagram (Diagram 5).

Diagram 5: Languages used by students while working in pairs

Moreover, I asked if they used English in their everyday life in some of the countries mentioned above, (for example India) where English is one of the official languages. The answers are reported in the following diagram (Diagram 6).
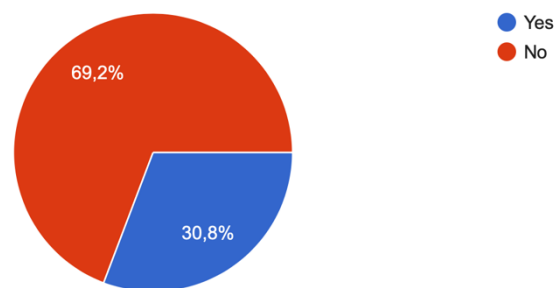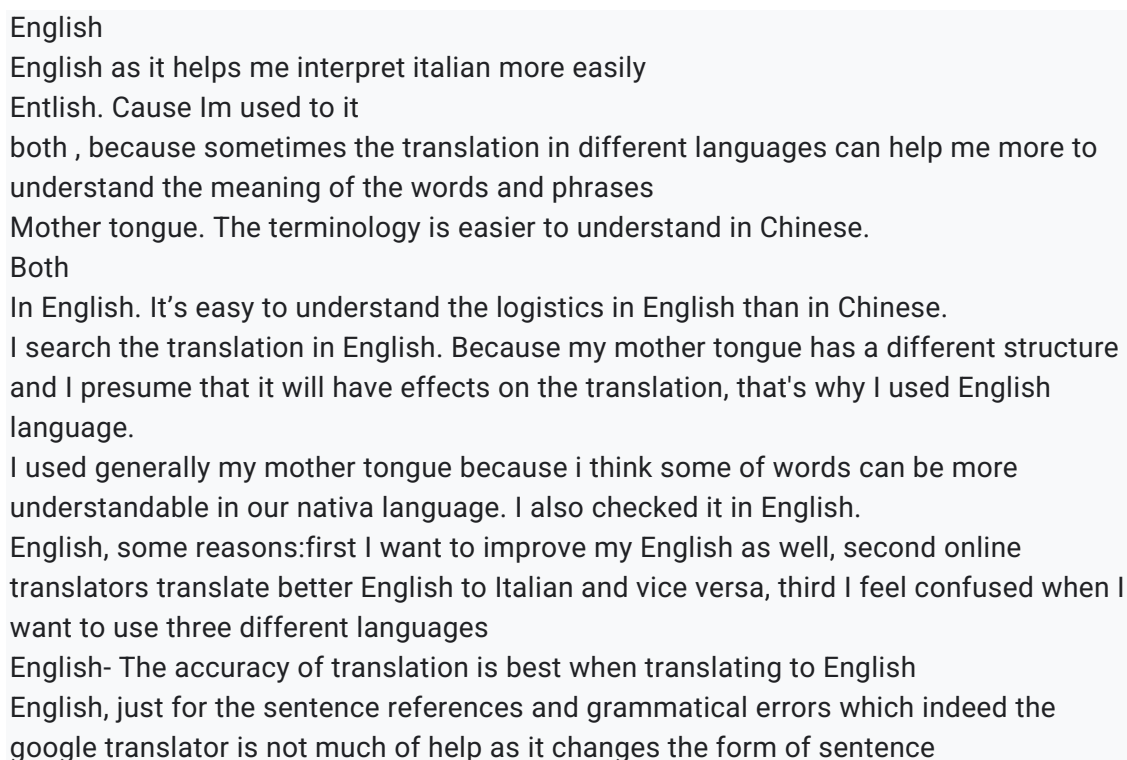

Diagram 6: Number of students speaking English every day in their home country

While observing lessons, I noticed that the students frequently used online translators, and for this reason, I decided to add this question (to the questionnaire): "When you use an online translator, do you search the translation in your mother tongue or in English? Why?". The answers are reported in the image below (Figure 7).

English
English as it helps me interpret italian more easily
Entlish. Cause Im used to it
both , because sometimes the translation in different languages can help me more to understand the meaning of the words and phrases
Mother tongue. The terminology is easier to understand in Chinese.
Both
In English. It's easy to understand the logistics in English than in Chinese.
I search the translation in English. Because my mother tongue has a different structure and I presume that it will have effects on the translation, that's why I used English language.
I used generally my mother tongue because i think some of words can be more understandable in our nativa language. I also checked it in English.
English, some reasons:first I want to improve my English as well, second online translators translate better English to Italian and vice versa, third I feel confused when I want to use three different languages
English- The accuracy of translation is best when translating to English
English, just for the sentence references and grammatical errors which indeed the google translator is not much of help as it changes the form of sentence

Figure 7: Students' responses about the language used in online translator with their explanation

After reporting all the information collected during the participant observation and the online written questionnaire, the next section will analyse the data referring to the theories and the scholars previously presented in the first and second chapters of this dissertation.

3.5 Data analysis and conclusions

This section analyses the data collected and previously reported comparing them with the theories and studies presented in the first and second chapters regarding English as a Lingua Franca and Translanguaging. Following the order of data presentation, the analysis will start with those regarding the students' provenience. At a first glance, it may seem that they came from the Expanding Circle (for example Chinese students) and the Outer Circle (for example Indian students) (Kachru, 1992). As already explained in the first chapter, this difference might no be longer relevant. In fact, as the data concerning

students' level of English show, it is evident that more than 60% of the respondents had a B2-C1 level. At the same time, 69,2% of them said that they did not use English on a daily basis when they were in their home country. This may show how Kachru's (1992) classification of English speakers cannot be applied to these days. Moreover, the students were studying at the University of Padua also because they had a high level of English and were able to follow lessons in English. All these data may show that the division of Kachru's Circles of English (1992) is no longer true, because English is studied as a foreign language all around the world and used as a FL, and when students are 20-25 (as more than a half of the respondents were) they already have a good knowledge of the language, they are all on the same level, even if English is not one of the official languages of their countries.

As concerns the use of English as a Lingua Franca in class it is interesting to notice that 10 students out of 13 used ELF when speaking in groups or pairs. In fact, the groups were mixed, with people from different nationalities, who had to speak Italian (pre-A1 level). When they could not use Italian because they did not know verbs, expressions, vocabulary or sentence structure they used English because it was the only "contact language" (Firth, 1996: 240) they had. When they were speaking using ELF in groups or with me, I noticed some characteristics presented by Seidlhofer in VOICE (2004 in Cogo, 2006). For example, they frequently used the verbs *do*, *have*, *make*, and *understand*; they did not always use articles when they are present in ENL, and they preferred 'that clauses' to other sentence structures.

Focusing on their Bachelor's/Master's/PHDs, it is interesting to notice that those were EMI programmes, already defined in Chapter 1, where all different subjects were taught in English. It may be significant that all those students had the chance to study in Italy, where the official language is completely different from their mother tongue, thanks to their knowledge of English and the existence of EMI programmes. Referring to the language support (Galloway and Rose, 2021) presented in the first chapter, those students passed through a "Selection model", which means they were chosen because they had proficiency in English, and there was a long process of selection even based on their academic merit in their home country. This is a sign of how EMI programmes are important in the present and the future of academic institutions, both for students who can

study outside their home country, and lecturers who can teach in several different countries without worrying about the language of instruction of that institution.

Analysing the language learning strategies, the students used the cognitive strategy, studied by Oxford (2001), of note-taking, the compensatory strategy of paraphrasing the missing word, and the social strategy of asking for clarification when something was not clear. When it came to speaking the students used some of the strategies explained by Lewandowska (2019), already seen in Chapter 1, such as circumlocution: for example, a student who did not know how to say *casa* said, "the place where you live, sleep, eat". Moreover, they invented some verb forms relying on general rules, especially with irregular verbs, for instance, they said *io ando* instead of *io vado.* In addition, the students used non-verbal communication to express their opinions when they did not know the verb or the word needed, for example, a student used hand gestures to say "I like it" or "I don't know".

As concerns the place of learning, this multicultural class can be defined as a translanguaging context. As already explained in the second chapter, the students used a "unitary linguistic repertoire" (Vogel and Garcia, 2017): they all used English and Italian, but also their mother tongues and dialects if more than one student understood it. The translanguaging context has many advantages: what came up from this particular class was that the students used more than one language to learn Italian. As explained by Baker (2012) and extensively described in Chapter 2, studying something in more than one language allows the brain to assimilate it better. Moreover, the students can use their entire linguistic repertoire to express themselves and give support to the other students. An example of that is the fact that two students spoke French and used it to understand some grammar rules of Italian because their mother tongues had a completely different alphabet and structure. This is also a way to practice other languages in which the students are less proficient. As previously seen, translanguaging has also many challenges, and in this class, one of those presented by Ticheloven et al. (2019) may be evident. It is that the teacher spoke only Italian and English, and when students had difficulties understanding grammar rules or the structure of sentences, he had no other means but to show images or use non-verbal communication. Even the students had to put a great deal of effort into learning a new language through another one which was not their mother tongue. Focusing on the ecology of learning, studied by Van Lier (2010), during the lessons it

happened more than once that the teacher created a relationship not only with students but also between the individual and an object. For example, talking about the weather, he pointed to the window and said "Guarda! Oggi c'è bel tempo!".

Analysing the translanguaging practices, already presented in the second chapter, as Ticheloven et al. (2019) suggested "The teachers [...] suggest activities such as group work not imposing a monolingual approach [...]": indeed the teacher never forced the students to use only Italian to speak when creating groups for conversations. In this way, the students built their knowledge using their learning method, which is better for them. One interesting practice the students adopted, studied by Cummins (2017), was that of using the Internet, in particular online translators. On the online written questionnaire, I asked the students in which language they translated Italian words or phrases. Interestingly, most of them answered English, for different reasons, for example, the fact that the online translator is more accurate with English translations compared to their mother tongue, or they said their native language structure is too different from Italian and they assumed English is more similar to it. On the other hand, some of the respondents said that the terminology is more understandable in their mother tongue. This proves how different the learning approaches of each student are. Another activity used in class was the Wordwall website, which can be used to play with flashcards and memorise vocabulary. This type of task was similar to the bulletin board proposed by the CUNY-NYSIEB project, extensively described in the second chapter.

Observing and analysing this Communicative Italian course I had the chance to see the great opportunity ELF gives to its users. The students did not know Italian at the beginning and the only possible solution for them was to study it through their language or talk directly with Italian people or attend a course held in Italian. The existence of ELF and their knowledge of it made the Italian learning process easier. Concerning the translanguaging context, I would specify that it was created unintentionally: in fact, the students used their mother tongues or dialects, but not all the languages were equally used during the course. On the other hand, I noticed how a translanguaging context can be useful for the students learning a new language because they can use their linguistic repertoire and find what is more similar to the language they are acquiring. This leads to a better and deeper understanding of the structure and rules of the new language.

Conclusion

This dissertation attempted to analyse the use of English as a Lingua Franca in a translanguaging context. Thanks to the theories reported in the first and second chapters, I analysed the interactions inside a class of a Pre-A1 Communicative Italian course held at the University of Padua. Reflecting on the data collected, I noticed how English as a Lingua Franca is fundamental in a multicultural class. In fact, without its existence, the students could not interact with each other and with the teacher. They would be obliged to take a course in their mother tongue to learn Italian. ELF created a bridge, a connection between their diversity and let the language learning work towards the acquisition of a new language. In addition, I realized that those students had the chance to study in Italy because EMI programmes exist, and the students knew ELF. If EMI did not exist, these students would never come to Italy, and at the same time, other students from all around the world could not move abroad to study. This fact is not only related to academic life, but those students also have a cultural experience in a new country, they can learn customs and traditions of that place, enriching their personal experience. For these reasons, I find ELF particularly important today, especially for studying opportunities and life experience for young people.

As concerns translanguaging, I would stress that the context I observed was not a translanguaging class done on purpose. In fact, there was only one teacher who knew Italian and English, which means that not all the languages were equally represented. In addition, the activities proposed, and the grammar explanation were given using ELF or Italian, and all the other languages could be used only while working in groups or pairs, and to take notes. Despite this limitation, I found this context extremely useful for my research because it showed how translanguaging is something that can occur naturally, depending on the situation and on the participants. The students used their mother tongues to take notes, they asked questions in ELF, compared different languages to understand Italian, shared their traditions and were interested in those belonging to the others. Because of this, I consider this Italian course as a real translanguaging context.

Furthermore, I believe translanguaging practices are fair and equal ways of teaching and learning because different languages and cultures are put on the same level. There are no minority languages or less important traditions. This educational approach teaches students how to act towards inclusion, accepting the diversity and helping each

other. Moreover, translanguaging lets everyone express themselves in a personal way, using the words they feel closer to their thoughts and feelings. I had the chance to observe how translanguaging helped students to learn a new language, because they used other languages to better understand grammar rules, for example. It was interesting to see how students learned and understood things differently, because each one had a unique background and language knowledge, which means their learning processes differed.

Concerning an important limitation, which is the amount of data collected, I would say the time spent in the Italian class was limited to two weeks and the respondents to the questionnaire were only thirteen. I am aware that the analysis I made is not very extensive, but finding a translanguaging context to observe is not easy. Although the time spent observing was not long, I think the data collected were enough to shed light on the theories of ELF and translanguaging. In the future, I would like to experience a similar context to examine these phenomena in depth.

Thanks to this paper, I realized how English as a Lingua Franca is important in many contexts nowadays and how people are not aware about the way we communicate using it. Unfortunately, society tends to criticize ELF speakers, labelling them as incompetent English speakers who make grammar mistakes and are not completely fluent, while they are not. I hope this prejudice will disappear through time because ELF represents an opportunity to study, work, interact easy and globally. As concerns translanguaging practices, I hope this learning and teaching method will be implemented in schools in the next years, because of all its advantages both concerning the learning itself, but also the social sphere. Using this approach can definitely help in fighting discrimination, racism and bullying in the earlier years of education, which means that it could have a great impact on the society.

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Riassunto in italiano

Oggi viviamo in un mondo estremamente multiculturale, in ogni paese possiamo trovare persone di nazionalità, lingue, usi, costumi differenti. Nonostante questa diversità le persone creano delle relazioni proficue in ambito sociale, accademico e lavorativo. Questo accade grazie all'utilizzo di un mezzo imprescindibile, una lingua tramite, lingua franca, che oggi è l'ELF, English as a Lingua Franca. Per questa ragione ho scelto di studiare questo fenomeno, esplorando le sue caratteristiche, chi ne fa uso e i fenomeni che ne conseguono. Inoltre, ho deciso di analizzare le dinamiche del translanguaging, un metodo di insegnamento innovativo che trovo particolarmente adatto a una società multiculturale come quella in cui viviamo. Infatti, questo metodo permette di dare il giusto valore a ciascuna lingua e cultura presente all'interno della classe e spinge gli studenti a cooperare e ad aiutarsi tra di loro. Questo particolare processo di apprendimento permette di crescere una generazione futura cosciente delle differenze, ma aperta ad accettare la diversità. Per poter osservare direttamente i fenomeni sopra descritti, ho scelto di analizzare una classe di livello Pre-A1 di un corso di Italiano Comunicativo, e di osservarla durante tutta la durata del corso, tenuto al CLA (Centro linguistico di Ateneo) dell'Università di Padova. Questa ricerca sul campo mi ha permesso di esplorare sia l'utilizzo dell'English as a Lingua Franca, che un contesto di translanguaging.

Per quanto riguarda la struttura della tesi, questa si articola in tre capitoli, il primo presenta l'English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), il secondo il Translanguaging e il terzo è dedicato all'analisi dello studio di caso, ovvero l'osservazione della classe del corso di Italiano Comunicativo tenuto al Centro linguistico dell'Università di Padova. Ho scelto due principali domande di ricerca a cui ho cercato di rispondere attraverso questa tesi, ovvero: "Quali strategie comunicative utilizzano coloro che mettono in uso l'ELF all'interno di un corso Pre-A1 di Italiano Comunicativo?" e "In che modo un contesto di translanguaging facilita l'apprendimento di una lingua in una classe multiculturale?". La prima domanda mira ad analizzare le strategie ricorrenti che vengono utilizzate nelle interazioni ELF, in questo caso particolare all'interno di una classe dove si apprende una lingua straniera. La seconda domanda, invece, ha come obiettivo quello di comprendere come avviene il processo di apprendimento di una lingua quando la classe è composta da studenti provenienti da diverse nazioni che parlano lingue differenti.

Nel primo capitolo vengono presentate le definizioni di L1, L2, FL, NS, NNS e viene data una chiara definizione di English as a Lingua Franca. Successivamente, viene presentato VOICE (Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English), ovvero un corpus online contenente trascrizioni di discorsi in cui si utilizza ELF. Grazie a questo corpus si è riusciti a individuare alcune caratteristiche lessico grammaticali ricorrenti in ELF. Il primo capitolo esplica poi uno dei fenomeni conseguenti al ELF, ovvero EMI (English Medium Instruction) cioè corsi accademici tenuti in inglese, presenti soprattutto in ambito universitario in tutto il mondo. Questo capitolo si conclude con la presentazione di alcune strategie di apprendimento delle lingue utilizzate da studenti che imparano una seconda lingua.

Il secondo capitolo invece illustra il metodo del translanguaging, i suoi vantaggi e le sfide che esso comporta. Vi è poi una spiegazione del concetto di ecologia dell'apprendimento e viene illustrato nel dettaglio il ruolo degli insegnanti. Infine, vengono descritte le attività che si possono fare in una classe attraverso il translanguaging e viene fatto riferimento a un importante progetto messo in atto negli Stati Uniti, il CUNY-NYSIEB (City University of New York's State Initiative for Emergent Bilinguals).

Il terzo capitolo è dedicato all'analisi del caso di studio, il corso di Italiano Comunicativo di livello Pre-A1 tenuto al Centro linguistico dell'Università di Padova. Prima di tutto viene presentato il metodo di ricerca, ovvero l'osservazione partecipante e il questionario scritto. Successivamente il capitolo descrive il contesto all'interno del quale viene svolta la ricerca, per esempio illustrando il piano delle lezioni. Vengono poi presentati i partecipanti, ovvero l'insegnante e gli studenti che sono oggetto dell'osservazione. I dati raccolti vengono riportati e analizzati facendo riferimento alle teorie precedentemente esaminate nei capitoli precedenti.

Per quello che riguarda i limiti di questa ricerca bisogna precisare che il tempo che ho trascorso all'interno della classe era limitato a due settimane, che il questionario ha ricevuto solo tredici risposte e che l'obiettivo del corso non era direttamente quello di utilizzare il metodo del translanguaging per insegnare e imparare. Infatti, il professore conosceva solo la lingua italiana e inglese, mentre gli studenti parlavano molte altre lingue che quindi non venivano equamente rappresentate all'interno della classe. Nonostante questi limiti, credo che l'osservazione abbia generato dati sufficienti per poter

analizzare un contesto di translanguaging nato in maniera naturale, senza imposizioni, grazie all'atteggiamento aperto e positivo mostrato dai partecipanti. Inoltre, i dati raccolti mi hanno permesso di ritrovare le caratteristiche dell'ELF descritte nel capitolo teorico dedicato.

La ricerca effettuata in prima persona mi ha permesso di comprendere come l'English as a Lingua Franca sia uno strumento fondamentale in una classe multiculturale, dato che ha permesso al professore e agli studenti, parlanti lingue molto diverse tra loro, di interagire, insegnare e imparare una nuova lingua, l'Italiano. L'ELF ha fatto da ponte per permettere il processo di apprendimento. Grazie a questa osservazione partecipante mi sono resa conto di quanto l'ELF e i programmi che utilizzano EMI diano la possibilità agli studenti di studiare all'estero e di fare esperienza di culture diverse dalla propria. Per questo credo che l'English as a Lingua Franca rappresenti un mezzo estremamente importante per comunicare e per vivere delle esperienze, come quelle di un periodo di studio all'estero, che altrimenti non sarebbero possibili. Conducendo questa ricerca mi sono resa conto di quanto l'English as a Lingua Franca non sia realmente conosciuto e riconosciuto dalle persone e venga invece etichettato come versione erronea dell'Inglese standard. L'ELF invece rappresenta un'opportunità, un mezzo che permette di scambiarsi opinioni, di insegnare, apprendere, lavorare a livello globale. Per quanto riguarda il translanguaging ho compreso quanto esso venga sottovalutato e sia poco conosciuto all'interno dell'ambiente scolastico. Esso rappresenta un metodo d'insegnamento e apprendimento che si inserisce perfettamente in una società multiculturale come quella in cui viviamo oggi che ha estremo bisogno di comprendere la diversità e puntare all'inclusione. A mio parere l'approccio educativo del translanguaging può rappresentare un metodo efficace per contrastare le discriminazioni, il razzismo e il bullismo che si sviluppano durante i primi anni di scolarizzazione. Implementare il translanguaging nelle scuole può avere un forte impatto sulla società, permette un arricchimento linguistico e culturale, ma anche sociale, promuovendo l'inclusività.